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FORCE

The Constituent Assembly chivalrously declared the French possessions to be citizens of France ; and, though the dread of Jacobinism retarded abolition, its ultimate triumph was mainly due to the world-wide currency of French ideas. In a third direction the Revolution marks a turning point in the history of women. Though the National Assembly refused to receive a petition for female suffrage, the conception of equality led straight to the demand for equal treatment and equal opportunities for both sexes. A few ineffective champions of woman's rights had raised their voices before the Revolution, but it was the appeal to reason and the heightened sense of the worth of the individual implied in the Declaration of the Rights of Man which rendered the ultimate overthrow of the sex barrier inevitable. No work of the revolutionary era breathed the very spirit of the new gospel of equality of rights in fuller measure than Mary Wolstonecraft's "*Rights of Women*;" and the arguments set forth in her eloquent plea are echoed in the cooler pages of Condorcet and Bentham, Hippel and Friedrich Schlegel.

Finally, the principle of equality gave an immense impetus to socialism. The members of the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies \pere bourgeois individualists, whose class selfishness moves the wrath not only of socialist historians such as Jaurfes, Kropotkin and Mathiez* but also of the radical Aulard. With the overthrow of the Monarchy and the election of the Convention in 1792 by universal male suffrage a breach was made in the defences of the victorious bourgeoisie ; but when the Terror was over and the Convention dissolved in 1795, France returned to a restricted franchise. The Directory was the organ of the middle class. In such an atmosphere socialist ideas and socialist legislation were heresy;

yet the deeper
forces set in motion by the great upheaval could
not be con-
fined to the political sphere. The
nationalization of the land
appears frequently in the pamphlets of the
revolutionary
decade ; and with the conspiracy of Babeuf in
1796 socialism
ceased to be merely a speculative doctrine
and became a
political programme. Though not the first of
its prophets,
he was the first of its martyrs. More
important than any
direct advocacy was the effect of the sudden
and wholesale
changes of ownership and the attack on the
sacredness of
property. If, as the Declaration of the Rights of
Man affirmed,*
we are born equal in rights, the contrasts
between inherited
wealth and inherited poverty was bound to
provoke the